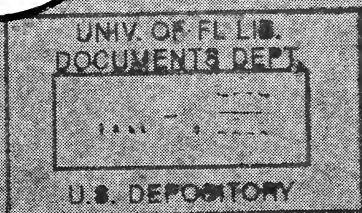


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REPORT ON THE Paris Peace Conference

by the Secretary of State





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Paris Peace Conference

ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

It is now 15 months since the decision was reached at Potsdam to set up the Council of Foreign Ministers to start the preparatory work on the peace treaties with Italy, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Finland.

Those months have been hard, difficult months.

At the Council of Foreign Ministers and at the Paris Peace Conference your representatives were a united and harmonious delegation acting under the guidance and instructions of the President of the United States. The difficult tasks were immeasurably lightened by the splendid work and cooperation of my associates, Senator Connally, Democratic chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Senator Vandenberg, spokesman for the Republican Party in foreign affairs. In the Conference we have represented no political parties. We have been united in representing the United States.

After every great war the victorious allies have found it difficult to adjust their differences in

Delivered by radio from Washington on the occasion of the return of Secretary Byrnes from the Paris Peace Conference, which took place from July 29 to Oct. 15. The address was broadcast over the national network of the National Broadcasting System, stations WOL and WOR of the Mutual Broadcasting System, and stations WWDC and WINX of Washington, on Oct. 18.

the making of peace. Even before the fighting stopped, President Roosevelt warned us that

"The nearer we came to vanquishing our enemies the more we inevitably became conscious of differences among the allies."

That was why President Roosevelt was so insistent that the United Nations should be established before the peace settlements were made.

It was inevitable that in the making of concrete peace settlements the Allies should discuss and debate the issues on which they disagree and not those on which they agree. It was also inevitable that such discussions should emphasize our differences.

That is one reason I have continuously pressed to bring about agreements upon the peace settlements as rapidly as possible.

Leaving unsettled issues which should be settled only serves to increase tension among the Allies and increase unrest among the peoples affected.

We cannot think constructively on what will or will not contribute to the building of lasting peace and rising standards of life until we liquidate the war and give the peoples of this world a chance to live again under conditions of peace.

It is difficult to deal with the problems of a convalescing world until we get the patient off the operating table.

These treaties are not written as we would write them if we had a free hand. They are not written as other governments would write them if they had a free hand. But they are as good as we can hope to get by general agreement now or within any reasonable length of time.

Our views on reparations are different from the views of countries whose territories were laid waste by military operations and whose peoples were brought under the yoke of alien armies and alien gestapos.

The reparation payments are heavy—excessively heavy in some cases. But their burdens should not be unbearable if the peoples on which they are laid are freed from the burdens of sustaining occupying armies and are given a chance to rebuild their shattered economic lives.

For Europe with her mingled national economies there are no ideal boundary settlements.

The proposed settlement for the Trieste area was long and warmly debated. The Conference approved the proposal of the Council of Foreign Ministers that this area should become a free territory under the protection of the United Nations. The Conference also by a two-thirds vote made recommendations for an international statute defining the responsibilities of the United Nations in relation to the free territory. Such recommendations are an expression of world opinion and cannot be arbitrarily disregarded.

Those recommendations of the Conference provide that the governor appointed by the Security Council should have sufficient authority to maintain public order and security, to preserve the independence and integrity of the territory, and to protect the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of all the inhabitants.

The minority proposal which was supported by the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and other Slav countries would have made a figurehead of the United Nations governor and would have given

Yugoslavia virtual control of the customs, currency, and foreign affairs of the territory. Certainly we could not agree to that. It would make the territory a protectorate of Yugoslavia and would leave the United Nations powerless to prevent it becoming a battleground between warring groups. There must be no seizure of power in Trieste after this war as there was in Fiume after the last war.

The Yugoslav Delegation advised the Conference it would not sign the treaty recommended. My hope however is that after consideration Yugoslavia will realize that just as other states have made concessions she must make concessions in order to bring about the peace.

Although the Council of Foreign Ministers were unable to agree to any change in the Austrian-Italian frontier, the representatives of Austria and Italy at Paris were encouraged by the American Delegation to reach an agreement which should help to make the South Tyrol a bond rather than a barrier between the two peoples.

It is my earnest hope that Czechoslovakia and Hungary and Rumania and Hungary may find by common agreement somewhat similar solutions to their complicated nationality problems on the basis of working together as friends and as neighbors. We in America know that people of many different races and stocks can live together in peace in the United States. They should be able to live together in peace in Europe.

At Potsdam in the summer of 1945 President Truman stressed the importance of providing for free navigation of the great international rivers

in Europe on terms of equality for the commerce of all states.

President Truman was not seeking any special advantage for the United States. He was seeking to promote peace. He was seeking to ensure that these great waterways should be used to unite and not divide the peoples of Europe.

The Delegations representing the Soviet Republic and the Slav countries have vigorously opposed the proposal.

The Paris Conference recommended by a two-thirds vote that the treaties should ensure freedom of commerce on the Danube on terms of equality to all states.

I hope that when the Foreign Ministers meet we can agree upon the adoption of this recommendation.

In recent weeks much has been said about acrimonious debates and the divisions in the Paris Conference. Back of those debates and divisions were real and deep differences in interest, in ideas, in experience, and even in prejudices.

Those differences cannot be dispelled or reconciled by a mere gloss of polite words. And in a democratic world those differences cannot and should not be kept from the peoples concerned.

In a democratic world, statesmen must share with the people their trials as well as their triumphs.

It is better that the world should witness and learn to appraise clashes of ideas rather than clashes of arms.

If this peace is to be lasting, it must be a people's peace; and the peoples of this world who long

for peace will not be able to make their influence felt if they do not know the conflict in ideas and in interest that give rise to war, and if they do not know how the statesmen and the peoples of other countries view those conflicts.

But it is our hope that in international democracy, as in national democracy, experience will prove that appeals to reason and good faith which unite people count for more in the long run than appeals to prejudice and passion which divide people.

In a world where no sovereign state can be compelled to sign or ratify a peace treaty, there is no perfect peacemaking machinery. Where boundaries, colonies, and reparations are involved, a peace treaty cannot be made effective unless it is satisfactory to the principal powers.

Under these circumstances the Paris Conference provided as adequate an opportunity for the smaller states and the ex-enemy states to express their views on the proposed treaties as it was practical to provide.

The thing which disturbs me is not the lettered provisions of the treaties under discussion but the continued if not increasing tension between us and the Soviet Union.

The day I took office as Secretary of State I stated that "the supreme task of statesmanship the world over is to help the people of this war-ravaged earth to understand that they can have peace and freedom only if they tolerate and respect the rights of others to opinions, feelings and ways of life which they do not and cannot share."

It is as true now as it was then that the development of sympathetic understanding between the

Soviet Union and the United States is the paramount task of statesmanship.

Such understanding is necessary to make the United Nations a true community of nations.

From the Potsdam Conference, which took place at the beginning of his administration, President Truman and I have worked and we shall continue to work to bring about an understanding with the Soviet Government.

Two states can quickly reach an understanding if one is willing to yield to all demands. The United States is unwilling to do that. It is equally unwilling to ask it of another state.

Every understanding requires the reconciliation of differences and not a yielding by one state to the arbitrary will of the other.

Until we are able to work out definite and agreed standards of conduct such as those which govern decisions within the competence of the International Court of Justice, and such as those which we hope may be agreed upon for the control of atomic energy, international problems between sovereign states must be worked out by agreement between sovereign states.

But if states are to reach such agreements they must act in good faith and in the spirit of conciliation. They must not launch false and misleading propaganda against one another.

They must not arbitrarily exercise their power of veto, preventing a return to conditions of peace and delaying economic reconstruction.

No state should assume that it has a monopoly of virtue or of wisdom. No state should ignore or veto the aggregate sentiments of mankind.

States must not unilaterally by threats, by pressures, or by force disturb the established rights of other nations. Nor can they arbitrarily resist or refuse to consider changes in the relationships between states and peoples which justice, fair play, and the enlightened sentiments of mankind demand.

We must cooperate to build a world order, not to sanctify the *status quo*, but to preserve peace and freedom based upon justice.

And we must be willing to cooperate with one another—veto or no veto—to defend, with force if necessary, the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

Those are the policies we have pursued. In following those policies we have been criticized at times for being too “soft” and at times for being too “tough”. I dislike both words. Neither accurately describes our earnest efforts to be patient but firm.

We have been criticized for being too eager to find new approaches after successive rebukes in our efforts to effectuate our policies. And we have likewise been criticized for not seeking new approaches. We will not permit the criticism to disturb us nor to influence our action.

We will continue to seek friendship with the Soviet Union and all other states on the basis of justice and the right of others, as well as ourselves, to opinions and ways of life which we do not and cannot share.

But we must retain our perspective.

We must guard against the belief that deep-rooted suspicions can be dispelled and far-reach-

ing differences can be reconciled by any single act of faith.

The temple of peace must be built solidly, stone upon stone. If the stones are loosely laid, they may topple down upon us.

We must equally guard against the belief that delays or set-backs in achieving our objective make armed conflict inevitable. It is entirely possible that the failure or inability of the Soviet leaders to rid themselves of that belief lies at the very root of our difficulties. We will never be able to rid the world of that belief if we ourselves become victims to it.

For centuries devout men and women thought it was necessary to fight with one another to preserve their different religious beliefs. But through long and bitter experience they learned that the only way to protect their own religious beliefs is to respect and recognize the rights of others to their religious beliefs.

War is inevitable only if states fail to tolerate and respect the rights of other states to ways of life they cannot and do not share. That is a truth we must all recognize.

Because in the immediate aftermath of war our efforts to induce nations to think in terms of peace and tolerance seem to meet with rebuff, we must not lose faith. What may be unrealizable now may be realizable when the wounds of war have had a chance to heal.

We must not lose faith nor cease to struggle to realize our faith, because the temple of peace cannot be completely built in a month or a year.

But if the temple of peace is to be built the idea of the inevitability of conflict must not be allowed to dominate the minds of men and tear asunder a world which God made one.

It is that idea of the inevitability of conflict that is throttling the economic recovery of Europe. It is that idea that is causing artificial tensions between states and within states.

The United States stands for freedom for all nations and for friendship among all nations. We shall continue to reject the idea of exclusive alliances. We shall refuse to gang up against any state.

We stand with all peace-loving, law-abiding states in defense of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Any nation that abides by those principles can count upon the friendship and cooperation of the United States, irrespective of national differences or possible conflict of interests.

No country desires unity among the principal powers more than we or has done more to achieve it. But it must be unity founded on the Charter and not unity purchased at its expense.

We deplore the tendency upon the part of the Soviet Union to regard states which are friendly to us as unfriendly to the Soviet Union and to consider as unfriendly our efforts to maintain traditionally friendly relations with states bordering on the Soviet Union.

We deplore the talk of the encirclement of the Soviet Union. We have it from no less authority than Generalissimo Stalin himself that the Soviet Union is in no danger of encirclement.

During the war the Baltic states were taken over by the U.S.S.R. The Polish frontier and the Finnish frontier have been substantially modified in Russia's favor. Königsberg, Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Ruthenia are to be given to her. In the Pacific, the Kuriles, Port Arthur, and Sakhalin have been assigned to her. Certainly the Soviet Union is not a dispossessed nation.

We know the suffering and devastation which Nazi aggression brought to the Soviet Union. The American people came to the support of the Soviet Union even before the United States was attacked and entered the war. Our people were allies of the Soviet people during the war. And the American people in time of peace desire to live on terms of friendship, mutual helpfulness, and equality with the Soviet people.

Before the Paris Peace Conference the United States spared no effort to reconcile its views on the proposed treaties with the views of the Soviet Union. Indeed it was the Soviet Union which insisted that our views be reconciled on all questions which the Soviet Union regarded as fundamental before they would consent to the holding of the Conference.

If, therefore, in the Conference we differed on some questions, they were not questions that were fundamental from the Soviet viewpoint.

While there were many issues which attracted little public attention on which the Soviet Union and the United States voted together, it was regrettable that on many issues which did command public attention the Soviet Union and the newly established governments in central and south-

eastern Europe voted consistently together against all the other states.

Whatever considerations caused this close alignment of the Soviet Union and her Slav neighbors on these issues, other states were not constrained to vote as they did by any caucus or bloc action.

It requires a very imaginative geographic sense to put China or Ethiopia into a Western bloc. And it was quite evident to discerning observers at Paris that not only China and Ethiopia, but Norway and France were particularly solicitous to avoid not only the fact, but the suspicion, of alliance with any Western bloc.

If the voting cleavage at Paris was significant, its significance lies in the fact that the cleavage is not between the United States and the Soviet Union, or between a Western bloc and the Soviet Union. The cleavage is based upon conviction and not upon strategy or hidden design.

I should be less than frank if I did not confess my bewilderment at the motives which the Soviet Delegation attributed to the United States at Paris. Not once, but many times, they charged that the United States had enriched itself during the war, and, under the guise of freedom for commerce and equality of opportunity for the trade of all nations, was now seeking to enslave Europe economically.

Coming from any state these charges would be regrettable to us. They are particularly regrettable when they are made by the Soviet Government to whom we advanced more than 10 billion dollars of lend-lease during the war and with whom we want to be friendly in time of peace.

The United States has never claimed the right to dictate to other countries how they should manage their own trade and commerce. We have simply urged in the interest of all peoples that no country should make trade discriminations in its relations with other countries.

On that principle the United States stands. It does not question the right of any country to debate the economic advantages or disadvantages of that principle. It does object to any government charging that the United States enriched itself during the war and desires to make "hand-outs" to European governments in order to enslave their peoples.

Long before we entered the war President Roosevelt took the dollar sign out of the war. He established lend-lease as the arsenal of democracy and opened that arsenal to all who fought for freedom. Europe did not pay and was not asked to pay to build or to replenish that arsenal. That was done with American labor and American resources.

The lend-lease settlements inaugurated by President Roosevelt have been faithfully and meticulously carried out by President Truman.

We want to assist in European reconstruction because we believe that European prosperity will contribute to world prosperity and world peace. That is not dollar democracy. That is not imperialism. That is justice and fair play.

We in America have learned that prosperity like freedom must be shared, not on the basis of "hand-outs," but on the basis of the fair and honest exchange of the products of the labor of free men and free women.



America stands for social and economic democracy at home and abroad. The principles embodied in the social and economic reforms of recent years are now a part of the American heritage.

It would be strange indeed if in this imperfect world our social and economic democracy were perfect, but it might help our Soviet friends to understand us better if they realized that today our social and economic democracy is further away from the devil-take-the-hindmost philosophy of by-gone days than Soviet Russia is from Tsarist Russia.

Whatever political differences there may be among us, we are firmly and irrevocably committed to the principle that it is our right and the right of every people to organize their economic and political destiny through the freest possible expression of their collective will. We oppose privilege at home and abroad. We defend freedom everywhere. And in our view human freedom and human progress are inseparable.

The American people extend the hand of friendship to the people of the Soviet Union and to all other people in this war-weary world. May God grant to all of us the wisdom to seek the paths of peace.